



## Staying Safe from Bacteria in Wells

**Get your well tested** if you notice changes in the taste, smell, color, or cloudiness of your well water, you should only use the water for flushing toilets.



### Test your wells once a year

All private residential wells should be tested at least once a year for bacteria (total coliform and *E. coli*) and chemicals that may be found.

- Test for bacteria whenever changes in water quality (for example, changes in color, taste, or smell) are noticed.
- Test for other chemicals, such as nitrate, that may be found in the area.

### Feeling sick?

Common symptoms include diarrhea, nausea, vomiting, cramps, or fever.

See a doctor if you or a family member has these symptoms.



### Poor quality well water can harm your health

Bacteria found in well water is a serious health risk because harmful germs could also be in the water. Young children, the elderly, and people with weakened immune systems can be more at risk of getting infections and developing illness. If your household has one of these individuals, you should consider testing your well water more than once per year.



### Take action on unsafe water

If your well water test results come back “unsafe,”:

- Use water from a safe source (such as bottled water) for drinking and food preparation
- Contact local DNR office or your local health department

### Learn more about unsafe bacteria in wells:

[dhs.wisconsin.gov/water/manure.htm](https://dhs.wisconsin.gov/water/manure.htm)  
[dnr.wi.gov/files/pdf/pubs/dg/dg0003.pdf](https://dnr.wi.gov/files/pdf/pubs/dg/dg0003.pdf)

### Contact information

For health related questions, contact:

- Your local health department: [dhs.wisconsin.gov/lh-depts/counties/index.htm](https://dhs.wisconsin.gov/lh-depts/counties/index.htm)
- Wisconsin Department of Health Services: (608) 266-1120 or [dhsenvhealth@wi.gov](mailto:dhsenvhealth@wi.gov)

For questions about your well, contact:

- DNR website: [dnr.wi.gov](https://dnr.wi.gov), search keyword “wells”

